

NEWSPLASH

A Publication of the SCDHEC Bureau of Water • Fall/Winter 2003

Understanding SC's Public Pool Regulations Will Save You Money

by Jim Ridge, Compliance Coordinator

Often, pool owners will spend first and get the facts later. The facts in this case refer to the construction and operational requirements specified in R.61-51, *Public Swimming Pools*. Not understanding what is required when building, changing, or operating your pool can cost you money and unnecessary downtime. Avoiding such situations is all about education, and there are many outlets you can use to help understand the regulations.

Use a local pool professional. These folks deal with our department daily and know of changes in the regulations. Ever been approached by a sales person hawking the newest innovation in gas chlorination? Well, a phone call to your local pool professional will let you know that gas chlorine, as a method of sanitation for public swimming pools in South Carolina, has been forbidden since 1992!

"You can view the *Newsplash* or the latest CPO course locations by visiting our Web site."

Do you know the first name of your Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) pool inspector? We have several district staff with more than 15 years experience with the pool program in their area of the state. They can

solve almost any pool operational riddle before it becomes a problem. Can't seem to get a straight answer about a "grandfathering issue" with your older pool? Call you local DHEC Environmental Quality Control (EQC) staff and they will clear things up for you in no time. Contact information for the local EQC office in your area is listed on the back of each *Newsplash* edition.

Got net? An Internet connection is all you need to download regulations, guidance documents, and even change-order forms for pool construction upgrades. There is a comprehensive webpage devoted just to the Department's Recreational Waters Program. At www.scdhec.gov/water/html/recreation.html you can view the *Newsplash* online or find the latest CPO course locations.

DHEC's central office staff, located in Columbia, can field any regulation question concerning construction, renovation, or operation. Even if you're just looking for a second opinion, we'll be glad to take your call or your e-mail inquires. Again, look for our web address and phone numbers in this edition of *Newsplash*.

The resources listed above exist to assist you and, if used, may help prevent you from making an expensive mistake with pool renovations or upgrades at your facility.

Question Corner

Q: Can I use my corporate credit card to satisfy reinspection fees or to pay for my annual operating permit(s)?

A: Yes – the Department now accepts Master Card and Visa for yearly operating and reinspection fees. Along with your 2004 bill, you will receive a credit card form. If you want to pay by credit card, simply fill out the form and mail it back to us. We will also be accepting credit card payment by phone. To make a payment by phone or if you have any questions concerning this information, call Christie Davis at (803) 898-3819 or e-mail daviscp@dhec.sc.gov.

Billing Information

Once again, there will not be an increase in the annual swimming pool operation permit fee for the coming season. The 2004 bill will be mailed out on January 15th. On March 15th, a late fee of 10 percent will be assessed for all delinquent permit fees. On April 15th, a late fee of 25% will be assessed for all delinquent permit fees. To avoid any late charges, please be sure to mail your payment no later than March 1st.

In an effort to insure that you receive your invoice in a timely manner, please notify us of any changes that have occurred in facility name, address, management company, or any other change that will affect receipt of your invoice. If you have any questions about your invoice, call Christie Davis at (803) 898-3819 or e-mail daviscp@dhec.sc.gov.

Things to Think About

by Neeraj Patel and Coy Watts, Permitting Section

What should I do if I am going to abandon or destroy a pool?

Pool owners sometimes need to abandon or destroy their pool. Pools that are not abandoned or destroyed properly may result in the pool shell floating out of the ground, which may result in damage and liability problems. Also, proper paperwork must be filled out with the actual demolition work. Here are some quick tips for pool owners that are thinking about abandoning their public swimming pools.

- One option would be to completely remove the old shell along with any related materials and dispose of it properly (e.g., local landfill).
- Once the structure and supporting material (i.e., piping, deck, etc.) are removed, the site must then be filled to match the nearby grade and land use. The fill material should be suitable for the planned use of the site (i.e., fill dirt, concrete, etc.). If future construction is intended for this area, proper compaction and material must be used in order to provide suitable support.



- If it is either not preferred or within the budget to remove the entire pool, then a partial demolition and fill may be an option. It is important to destroy the shell in a way that will remove its ability to "float" during a high groundwater event. This can be done by making several adequately sized holes throughout the pool floor with at least one in the deepest portion of the pool. The holes must be made through the shell by both breaking and removing sections, or by drilling. The holes should be sized so that water can enter and exit the shell easily. This will keep the pool

from floating. The pool should then be filled as described above.

- The Department must be notified in writing of any abandoned or destroyed public pools so that the facility's status record will be accurate. This information should be mailed to the attention of Mrs. Christie Davis at SCDHEC, Bureau of Water, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, S.C. 29201. Please include the following information: the pool name as shown on the last billing invoice, the pool's permit number, the actual pool address, and a contact name and number.
- Contact your insurance agent on any such work. Removing a potential liability, such as a pool, may reduce your property's insurance premium.

Have you considered winterizing your pool?

Now that the 2003 swimming season is over, many pool owners may close their pool during the winter months. One major part of any seasonal pool maintenance program is proper winterization. Here are some winterization tips from National Spa & Pool Institute (NSPI). For more information please visit their website at www.nspi.org.

Simple Winterizing:

- Keep the pool full of water and the filtration system operational.
- Continue routine maintenance on a reduced schedule.
- Check and maintain levels of chlorine and pH.
- Consider using a pool cover to keep the pool clean and the chemicals from evaporating.

Closing the Pool

- Get the water balanced properly to prevent stains, scaling and algae growth. Put in an extra dose of sanitizer to help keep the pool clean and algae free.

- Thoroughly clean and vacuum the pool. Drain below the skimmer inlet lines.
- Close valves on the skimmer.
- Make sure water does not accumulate and freeze in skimmers.
- Clean and backwash the filter.
- Drain all water in the heater, filter, pump and piping system.
- Turn off all power to the support equipment and remove fuses, or turn the circuit breakers to "off."
- If you have a portable kiddie slide or diving board, take it off and store it.
- Cover the pool and plug all openings.

Is my pool enclosure (i.e., fence) properly sized?

Section C of the State swimming pool regulation requires a four-foot fence for facility types B, C, D and F. The regulation also requires a six-foot fence for type A and E pools. However, each owner must keep in mind that the state's minimum requirements may not match those of the property's insurance carrier. DHEC recommends that an evaluation be done with your insurance carrier/provider to make sure that their requirements are also being met (e.g., additional fencing, signage, etc.). Check with your insurance provider for more information.

How can I minimize liability at my pool?

Most people use recreational facilities, including public swimming pools, as a means for relaxation, enjoyment, or exercise. Unfortunately, injuries do occur and liability issues may arise. Here are a few ways to minimize liability at pools. Please keep in mind that some of the following are only suggestions and are not required by regulation.

- State regulation R.61-51 requires proper signage at public pool facilities. This includes proper wording, size and number of signs. Some common signs are the

pool/spa rules, no lifeguard on duty swim at your own risk sign, shallow water no diving allowed, CPO signs, etc. Depending on the size and layout of the facility, additional signs may be posted to minimize liability.

- Similarly, the regulation requires that a certain amount of lifesaving and emergency equipment be provided. This can vary depending on the size and type of the pool. Additional lifesaving units (e.g., life ring, shepherd's crook, etc.) and emergency equipment (backboard with straps, blankets, etc.) can be made available to reduce liability.
- Minimum toilet facilities should be properly maintained. This includes maintaining good sanitary conditions, keeping the facility well drained and insuring that proper soap, toilet paper and drying units are present.
- All deck and diving areas should be in good condition (adequate drainage, non-slip surfaces, broken and uneven surfaces are fixed or at a minimum properly marked).
- Backgrounds and references should be checked for all lifeguards, pool operators and other staff.
- A list of all pool chemicals stored onsite should be kept in the pool chemical storage room along with current Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) information. Only trained staff should handle pool chemicals and equipment.
- It is recommended that as budgets allow, all waterline and deck depth markers be brought up to current regulatory standards. If applicable, international no diving symbol tiles should be installed with each deck depth marker.
- It is also recommended that as budgets allow, an automatic controller be installed on all spas and kiddie pools so that their pH and chlorine levels can be more accurately maintained.

If any public swimming pool is being repaired, remodeled or altered outside of the original approved plans and specifications, a proper change-order must be submitted to the Department on DHEC form 3627. For any questions or comments on the above article please contact either Neeraj Patel 803-898-3396 (patelnc@dhec.sc.gov) or Coy Watts 803-898-4257 (wattsem@dhec.sc.gov).

CDC Report Analyzes Pool Inspection Data

Reprinted from Volume 38, Issue 2 of the National Swimming Pool Foundation Newsletter
For the complete CDC report, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5222a1.htm.

Swimming is the second most popular exercise activity in the United States, with approximately 360 million annual visits to recreational water venues. This exposure increases the potential for the spread of recreational water illnesses (RWIs) (e.g. cryptosporidiosis, giardiasis, and shigellosis). Since the 1980s, the number of reported RWI outbreaks has increased steadily.



Local environmental health programs inspect public and semipublic pools periodically to determine compliance with local and state health regulations. During inspections for regulatory compliance, data pertaining to pool water chemistry, filtration and recirculation systems, and management and operations are collected. This report summarizes pool inspection data from databases at six sites across the United States collected during May 1 – September 1, 2002, and represents 22,131 pool inspections. The findings underscore the utility of these data for public health decision-making and the need for increased training and vigilance by pool operators to ensure high quality swimming pool water for use by the public.

A total of 21,561 violations of pool codes were documented during the 22,131 inspections; the majority (67.5%) occurred in pools for which no pool type (e.g., hotel/motel) was specified. Approximately one half (45.9%) of inspections indicated no violations, (54.1%) found one or more violations, and 8.3% of inspections resulted in immediate closure of the pool pending corrections of serious violation items (e.g. lack of disinfectant). Of total violations, water-chemistry violations comprised 38.7%, followed by filtration and recirculation system (38.6%), and policy and management (22.7%). For the 24.3% of inspections for which pool type could be ascertained (typed inspections), a range of violations occurred. For typed inspections collecting free chlorine data, 4.5% - 18.4% reported violations. The highest percentage (18.4%) of violations occurred in child wading pools, medical/therapy pools (14.3%), and hotel/motel pools (14.0%). In typed inspections, the percentage of total violations attributed to pH infractions ranged from 4.7% to 16.7%, with the highest percentage occurring in child wading pools. For child wading pools, 8% had coincident free chlorine and pH violations. Filtration and recirculation system violations occurred in 34.0% - 76.8% of typed inspections, with municipal pools having the greatest percentage. In sites where training was required, inspections demonstrated that many pool operators did not have appropriate certification (0-35.7%), with apartment/condominium complexes having the highest percentage of violations.

EQC District Offices

The local Environmental Quality Control (EQC) Office performs compliance inspections and can provide technical assistance. Check the numbers below for the office in your area.

Appalachia I (<i>Anderson, Oconee</i>).....	(864) 260-5569
Appalachia II (<i>Greenville, Pickens</i>)	(864) 241-1090
Appalachia III (<i>Spartanburg, Cherokee, Union</i>)	(803) 596-3800
Catawba (<i>Lancaster, Chester, York</i>)	(864) 285-7461
Central Midlands (<i>Richland, Lexington, Newberry, Fairfield</i>).....	(803) 896-0620
Edisto Savannah (<i>Aiken, Orangeburg, Barnwell, Bamberg, Allendale</i>)	(803) 641-7670
Low Country (<i>Beaufort, Jasper, Colleton, Hampton</i>)	(843) 846-1030
Pee Dee (<i>Florence, Dillon, Marion, Marlboro, Darlington, Chesterfield</i>)	(843) 661-4825
Trident (<i>Charleston, Berkeley, Dorchester</i>)	(843) 740-1590
Upper Savannah (<i>Greenwood, Abbeville, Laurens, Saluda, Edgefield, McCormick</i>).....	(864) 223-0333
Waccamaw (<i>Horry, Georgetown, Williamsburg</i>)	(843) 448-1902
Wateree (<i>Sumter, Kershaw, Lee, Clarendon, Calhoun</i>).....	(803) 778-1531

DHEC Central Office Contact Numbers

Main Telephone Number	(803) 898-4300
Main Fax Number	(803) 898-4215
For questions concerning construction permits and change orders, call Shawn Clarke	(803) 898-3544
For questions concerning program policies and compliance issues, call Jim Ridge	(803) 898-4015
For questions concerning operating permit fees and address changes, call Christie Nelson	(803) 898-3819

CR-005077 12/03

.....
Printed on Recycled Paper Return Service Requested

Editor: Carol K. Roberts • 803.898.3542 • robertck@dhec.sc.gov
www.scdhec.gov/water/html/recreation.html



NEWSPLASH